

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 191131
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 /087 R

DRAFTED BY AF/W:DVKILLION:LFS
APPROVED BY AF:TWSEELYE
-----112797 121109Z /12

R 120308Z AUG 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 191131

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PDEV, PBOR, MASS, MR, US

SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON AF ACTING
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

SUMMARY: MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR KOCHMAN CALLED ON AF
ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY SEELYE AUGUST 10 ON RETURN
FROM CONSULTATIONS IN MAURITANIA. KOCHMAN BROUGHT WORD
THAT PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH SEEKS OPENING OF NEW IN DEPTH
EXCHANGES BETWEEN US AND MAURITANIA TO REFLECT AND
IMPLEMENT MAURITANIA'S INTENTION TO WORK AS CLOSELY AS
POSSIBLE WITH THE US. THE USG SHOULD TAKE A NEW, SERIOUS
LOOK AT MAURITANIA, APPRECIATE THE POTENTIAL OF ITS ROLE
AS BRIDGE BETWEEN ARABS AND BLACK AFRICA, AND PROVIDE
GREATER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND SOME MILITARY ASSISTANCE.
SEELYE ASSURED KOCHMAN THAT WE VALUE OUR RELATIONSHIP
WITH MAURITANIA AND WELCOMED A CLOSER DIALOGUE. END
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 191131

SUMMARY.

1. MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR KOCHMAN CALLED ON AF ACTING
ASSISTANT SECRETARY SEELYE AUGUST 10 SHORTLY AFTER
RETURN FROM CONSULTATIONS IN NOUAKCHOTT. AF/W COUNTRY
OFFICER ATTENDED MEETING.

2. KOCHMAN HAD SPENT TWO WEEKS IN NOUAKCHOTT MEETING PERSONALLY WITH PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH AND ALL CABINET MINISTERS. NOTING THAT CABINET WAS SUBSEQUENTLY REORGANIZED, KOCHMAN SAID ALL FORMER MINISTERS OF STATE HAD REMAINED IN OFFICE IN THIS MOVE AIMED AT AUSTERITY AND EFFICIENCY. KOCHMAN GAVE ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION IN MAURITANIA WHICH HE FELT WAS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM HIGHLY CHARGED PRESS ACCOUNTS. MATTERS WERE UNDER CONTROL, BUT THE POLISARIO ATTACKS COULD BE DESCRIBED AS AT A LEVEL JUST ABOVE GUERRILLA WARFARE AND SHORT OF CONVENTIONAL WAR, ORGANIZED AND ORCHESTRATED BY ALGERIA THROUGH MERCENARIES.

3. THE PRESSURES ON MAURITANIA ARE HEAVY, BUT TWO THINGS ARE CLEAR: MAURITANIA IS NO LONGER DEEPLY INVOLVED WITH THE SOCIALIST WORLD AND IS FOR FREE ENTERPRISE; AND, MAURITANIA OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED ITS INTERNATIONAL POLICIES. MAURITANIA NOW SUPPORTS US POSITIONS IN INTERNATIONAL FORA ON SUCH MAJOR QUESTIONS AS KOREA AND PUERTO RICO. THIS WAS NOT DONE TO PLEASE THE US, BUT BECAUSE IT REFLECTS THE SPIRIT OF THE MAURITANIAN PEOPLE. AS A RESULT, MAURITANIA IS NOW READY TO DEVELOP RELATIONS WITH THE US TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, IN ALL FIELDS. MAURITANIA IS A BRIDGE BETWEEN BLACK AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD, IS NOW IN A PERIOD OF TURMOIL AND
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 191131

REASSESSMENT, AND SUPPORTS US AFRICAN POLICIES AND THE NEW HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. ALL THESE FACTORS LEAD MAURITANIA TO BELIEVE THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS AN APPENDAGE OF MOROCCO. PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH THEREFORE WANTS TO ESTABLISH A GENUINE, FRUITFUL DIALOGUE WITH THE US AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS. KOCHMAN HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED BY PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH TO EXAMINE THE WAY IN WHICH THIS CAN BE BROUGHT ABOUT.

4. REFERRING TO HIS BRIEFING ON US MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS LAST YEAR AT THE PENTAGON, KOCHMAN SAID THAT HE WISHES TO RESUME (SHORTLY AFTER RETURN FROM FORTHCOMING LEAVE) HIS DIRECT CONTACTS WITHIN THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION. KOCHMAN PROPOSED ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND SOME MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM THE US. THE US HAS A VERY DYNAMIC, WELL-LIKED, AND EXTREMELY CAPABLE REPRESENTATIVE IN AMBASSADOR HANDYSIDE, BUT KOCHMAN FELT THAT AS A CLOSE FRIEND OF PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH HE HIMSELF COULD BE EXTREMELY USEFUL IN WASHINGTON IN OPENING THE NEW DIALOGUES OULD DADDAH SEEKS. THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED IN MAURITANIA AND AFRICA. THERE ARE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS TO

DISCUSS, AND KOCHMAN WOULD LIKE THE BENEFIT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S LATEST VIEWS ON AFRICA, AND IN PARTICULAR WEST AFRICA. THIS WOULD ASSIST MAURITANIA IN ACHIEVING ITS AMBITION TO BE AN EFFECTIVE BRIDGE LINKING ARABS AND BLACK AFRICANS. PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH WANTS TO SEE US-MAURITANIAN RELATIONS ON A GLOBAL BASIS "SHAPE UP" AND TAKE CONCRETE FORM AT ALL LEVELS -- POLITICAL, COMMERCIAL, AND ECONOMIC. TO THIS END, KOCHMAN WISHES TO CALL ON AF ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY, AND TO MEET WITH SECRETARY VANCE SOON. KOCHMAN ASSERTED THAT A FREE AND PROSPEROUS MAURITANIA IS WHAT PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH AND ALL MAURITANIANS SEEK, AND IN HIS OPINION THIS WOULD AS WELL BE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE FREE WORLD AND OF
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 191131

THE US.

5. AMBASSADOR SEELYE THANKED KOCHMAN FOR HIS FRANK VIEWS, AND ASSURED HIM THAT THE US WELCOMES AN INTENSIFICATION OF OUR DIALOGUE. HE WAS SURE THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE WISHES TO SEE KOCHMAN, AND WOULD SET UP A MEETING AT AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY. WE COULD DISCUSS A CALL ON THE SECRETARY AFTER KOCHMAN'S RETURN FROM LEAVE. WE VALUE OUR RELATIONS WITH ALL NATIONS, OF COURSE, BUT MAURITANIA CLEARLY RANKS AMONG THOSE NATIONS IN AFRICA WHICH ARE OF MORE SPECIAL INTEREST TO US. WE HAVE SPECIAL ESTEEM FOR PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH, WHOSE ACHIEVEMENTS WE APPLAUD AND WHOM WE RANK WITH OTHERS SUCH AS SENHOR, HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, AND ADHIJO AS OUTSTANDING WEST AFRICAN LEADERS. WE ARE HAPPY THAT OUR RELATIONS ARE DEVELOPING WELL, AND AGREE THAT MAURITANIA AS A MEMBER OF BOTH THE OAU AND THE ARAB LEAGUE CAN SERVE AN EFFECTIVE ROLE AS A LINK BETWEEN BLACK AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD. WE APPRECIATE KOCHMAN'S ASSESSMENT OF AMBASSADOR HANDYSIDE'S ROLE -- HE IS DYNAMIC AND KEEPS US VERY WELL INFORMED -- AND AGREE THAT AMBASSADOR KOCHMAN AS WELL SHOULD HAVE A ROLE HERE IN INCREASING THE TEMPO OF OUR RELATIONS.

6. SEELYE THEN SUGGESTED THAT WE COULD START NOW, WITH A SHARING OF US VIEWS ON US AFRICAN POLICIES. WE WOULD BENEFIT FROM MAURITANIA'S REACTION, AND ITS ADVICE AND COUNSEL. OUR PRINCIPAL PREOCCUPATION IS SOUTHERN AFRICA. FORMER SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD LAUNCHED A NEW INITIATIVE THERE, BUT THE DIFFERENCE IN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IS A DEEPER COMMITMENT AND DETERMINATION TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF AFRICA. THIS IS IN OUR OWN INTERESTS, BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT IT ALSO SERVES THE INTERESTS OF THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 191131

PEOPLES OF AFRICA. THERE IS NOW A DIFFERENCE IN STYLE AND EMPHASIS, A NEW SINCERE DEDICATION IN OUR EFFORTS. SEELYE TOLD KOCHMAN THAT WE HAVE FOUR MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN IN AFRICA WHERE THERE ARE OR HAVE BEEN CONFLICT SITUATIONS: SOUTHERN AFRICA, THE HORN, ZAIRE, AND THE SAHARA. AFTER OUTLINING OUR LATEST EFFORTS IN THE FIRST THREE AREAS, SEELYE TURNED TO THE

WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM. THE US HAS A PUBLIC POSITION OF NEUTRALITY. WE THOUGHT PARTITION WAS A REASONABLE SOLUTION AT THE TIME OF THE MADRID ACCORDS, AND OUR UNGA VOTE SO REFLECTED. WE SUPPORT SELF-DETERMINATION, BUT THERE ARE SOME INSTANCES IN WHICH THIS IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO APPLY IN THE STRICTEST SENSE. THE US IS CONCERNED OVER THE POLISARIO ATTACKS ON MAURITANIA, AND NOTES WITH SATISFACTION THAT MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION.

7. KOCHMAN SAID HE APPRECIATED SEELYE'S FRANK DISCUSSION AND HOPED IT PAVED THE WAY FOR MORE CONCRETE PROPOSALS IN THE NEAR FUTURE ON ECONOMIC AID AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE. KOCHMAN NOTED THAT SEELYE'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA WHICH HAD LED TO A US REASSESSMENT IN ITS RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA SEEMED PARALLEL TO MAURITANIA'S OWN SITUATION. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE DRAW APPROPRIATE CONCLUSIONS FROM OUR HORN EXPERIENCE IN APPROACHING OUR FUTURE RELATIONS WITH MAURITANIA. THE US MAY HAVE TO TAKE A PUBLIC POSITION OF NEUTRALITY ON THE WESTERN SAHARA, BUT AS THE MOST POWERFUL NATION IN THE WORLD IT CANNOT BE INDIFFERENT TO WHAT HAPPENS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. THE US, ASSERTED KOCHMAN, MUST BE PRESENT IN MAURITANIA, WHICH IS CLOSER TO THE US THAN SOMALIA, HAS GREAT POTENTIAL WITH A SMALL POPULATION, AND HAS SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY. AND, UNLIKE THE SOMALIA CASE, MAURITANIA IS NOT ATTACK-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 06 STATE 191131

ING ANYONE BUT IS UNDER ATTACK ITSELF.

8. MAURITANIA CAN DEFEND ITSELF, ASSURED KOCHMAN, AND HAS ALREADY RECEIVED SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE FROM FRANCE AND SAUDI ARABIA AS WELL AS FROM ITS DIRECT ALLY MOROCCO. SAUDI ARABIA WILL FOOT THE BILL FOR MAURITANIA'S MILITARY EXPENSES FOR AS LONG AS NECESSARY. BUT

MAURITANIA DOES NOT WANT TO DIVERT ITS ECONOMIC
RESOURCES. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS MAURITANIA'S GOAL, AND
TO THIS END IT WISHES TO COOPERATE WITH THE US.
MAURITANIA ALSO SEEKS TO COOPERATE WITH THE US IN THE
EXCITING TASK OF WORKING FOR PEACE IN AFRICA. FOR
THESE REASONS, KOCHMAN WOULD APPRECIATE AN OPPORTUNITY,
WHEN A SUITABLE OCCASION ARISES, TO SHARE HIS VIEWS WITH
THE SECRETARY. THE US SHOULD TAKE A SERIOUS LOOK AT
MAURITANIA AND AT WEST AFRICA. THIS ACTION WOULD BE
APPRECIATED BY OTHER AFRICAN STATES, MOST OF WHOM
SUPPORT MAURITANIA IN ITS PRESENT STRUGGLE. CHRISTOPHER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, AMBASSADORS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE191131
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DVKILLION:LFS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770290-1172
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770866/aaaacdui.tel
Line Count: 235
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4840755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1614735
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON AF ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY SUMMARY: MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR KOCHMAN CALLED ON
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PDEV, PBOR, MASS, MR, US
To: NOUAKCHOTT
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4840755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009